

**AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS**

In accordance with Rule 1.121, a complete claim listing is presented below. A status identifier (Original), **(Currently Amended)**, **(Cancelled)**, (Withdrawn), (Previously Presented), **(New)**, or (Not Entered) precedes each claim. Only the changes in amended claims are shown by strikethrough (deleted material) and underlining (added material).

1. **(Currently Amended)** A hypodermic needle, comprising:

a hollow tube having an outer surface, an interior surface defining a straight bore, and an angled end with respect to a longitudinal axis of the tube, the end having an opening surrounded by an external peripheral rim, a front half region proximal to a piercing tip defined by the angled end, and a rear half region opposite the front half region;

wherein at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 25% with respect to a wall thickness of the tube to form an internal beveled surface such that the internal beveled surface surrounds 20-70% of the opening and at least a portion of the internal beveled surface is in the rear half region; and

wherein the internal beveled surface is beveled from the outer surface to the interior surface in a direction towards the bore and away from the piercing tip.

2. **(Currently Amended)** The hypodermic needle of claim 1, ~~wherein the~~ at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 30%.

3. **(Currently Amended)** The hypodermic needle of claim 1, ~~wherein the~~ at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 35%.

4.       **(Currently Amended)** The hypodermic needle of claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 40%.

5.       **(Currently Amended)** The hypodermic needle of claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 50%.

6.       (Original) The hypodermic needle of claim 1, wherein the internal beveled surface is curved.

7.       (Previously Presented) The hypodermic needle of claim 6 wherein a circle coincident with the curvature of the internal beveled surface has a radius of curvature that is at least 25% with respect to the wall thickness.

8.       (Withdrawn) The hypodermic needle of claim 1, wherein the internal beveled surface surrounds 5-85% of the opening.

9.       (Withdrawn) The hypodermic needle of claim 1, wherein the internal beveled surface surrounds 20-70% of the opening.

10.      **(Currently Amended)** A hypodermic needle, comprising:  
a hollow tube having an outer surface, an interior surface defining a straight bore, and an angled end with respects to a longitudinal axis of the tube, the end having a front half region proximal to a piercing tip defined by the angled end, and a rear half region opposite the front half region; the end having a means for reducing fluid stress at an entrance of the needle, the means for reducing fluid stress comprising an opening surrounded by an

external peripheral rim wherein at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 25% with respect to a wall thickness of the tube to form an internal beveled surface such that the internal beveled surface surrounds 20-70% of the opening and at least a portion of the internal beveled surface is in the rear half region; and

wherein the internal beveled surface is beveled from the outer surface to the interior surface in a direction towards the bore and away from the cutting point.

11. **(Currently Amended)** In a hypodermic needle having an internal substantially cylindrical surface defining a straight bore; an external substantially cylindrical surface; an end angled with respect to a longitudinal axis of the needle, the end having an opening and defining a piercing tip; an outer peripheral rim, the rim partially surrounding a first region of the opening proximal to the piercing tip and connecting the external and internal cylindrical surfaces of the needle; the improvement comprising;

an internal beveled surface on the internal surface of the needle surrounding 20-70% of a second region of said opening opposite the first region, wherein the degree of beveling back of the rim is at least 25% with respect to a wall thickness of the hypodermic needle; and wherein the internal beveled surface is beveled from the external substantially cylindrical surface to the internal substantially cylindrical surface in a direction towards the bore and away from the piercing tip.

12. **(Previously Presented)** The hypodermic needle of claim 11, wherein at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 30%.

13. **(Previously Presented)** The hypodermic needle of claim 11,

wherein at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 50%.

14. (Original) A method of preparing a sample, comprising withdrawing blood with the hypodermic needle of Claim 1.

15. **(Currently Amended)** In a method of preparing a sample, comprising:

withdrawing blood with a hypodermic needle, the hypodermic needle having an internal substantially cylindrical surface defining a straight bore; an external substantially cylindrical surface; an end angled with respect to a longitudinal axis of the needle, the end having an opening and defining a piercing tip; an outer peripheral rim, the rim partially surrounding a first region of the opening proximal to the piercing tip and connecting the external and internal cylindrical surfaces of the needle; the improvement comprising withdrawing blood with the hypodermic needle having an internal beveled surface on the internal surface of the hypodermic needle surrounding 20-70% of a second region of said opening opposite the first region, wherein the degree of beveling back of the rim is at least 25% with respect to a wall thickness of the hypodermic; and wherein the internal beveled surface is beveled from the external substantially cylindrical surface towards the internal substantially cylindrical surface in a direction towards the bore and away from the piercing tip.

16. **(Currently Amended)** A method of making ~~the a~~ hypodermic needle ~~of claim 1~~, comprising beveling back an external peripheral rim of ~~a the~~ hypodermic needle, where the hypodermic needle comprises:

a hollow tube having an outer surface, an interior surface defining a bore, and an angled end with respect to a longitudinal axis of the tube, the

end having an opening surrounded by an external peripheral rim, a front half region proximal to a piercing tip defined by the angled end, and a rear half region opposite the front half region;

where at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 25% with respect to a wall thickness of the tube to form an internal beveled surface such that the internal beveled surface surrounds 20-70% of the opening and at least a portion of the internal beveled surface is in the rear half region; and

where the internal beveled surface is beveled from the outer surface to the interior surface in a direction towards the bore and away from the piercing tip.

17. (Currently Amended) A The method of making the hypodermic needle of claim 216, comprising: ~~beveling back an external peripheral rim of a hypodermic needle~~where at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 30% with respect to the wall thickness.

18. (Currently Amended) A The method of making the hypodermic needle of claim 316, comprising: ~~beveling back an external peripheral rim of a hypodermic needle~~where at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 35% with respect to the wall thickness.

19. (Currently Amended) A The method of making the hypodermic needle of claim 716, comprising: ~~beveling back an external peripheral rim of a hypodermic needle~~where a circle coincident with the curvature of the internal beveled surface has a radius of curvature that is at least 25% with respect to the wall thickness.

20. (Currently Amended) A The method of making the hypodermic needle of claim 816, comprising: ~~beveling back an external peripheral rim of a~~

~~hypodermic needle~~ where the internal beveled surface surrounds from 5 to 85% of the opening.

21.     **(New)**       The hypodermic needle of claim 1, where the internal beveled surface is straight.

22.     **(New)**       The hypodermic needle of claim 21, where a reduction of red blood cell hemolysis during blood collection is provided in comparison to a conventional hypodermic needle.

23.     **(New)**       The hypodermic needle of claim 11, where the internal beveled surface is straight.

24.     **(New)**       The hypodermic needle of claim 23, where a reduction of red blood cell hemolysis during blood collection is provided in comparison to a conventional hypodermic needle.

25.     **(New)**       The hypodermic needle of claim 11, where the internal beveled surface is curved.